

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09MONTERREY284, MILITARY PRESENCE NO PANACEA FOR NUEVO LEON

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MONTERREY284**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09MONTERREY284	2009-07-27 13:55	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Consulate Monterrey

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2011/02/10/index.php?section=politica&article=006n1pol>

VZCZCXRO7213  
RR RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHHO RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS RUEHTM  
DE RUEHMC #0284/01 2081355  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 271355Z JUL 09  
FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3839  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 4910  
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USNORTHCOM  
RUEABND/DEA HQ WASHDC  
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHMC/AMCONSUL MONTERREY 9433

218302  
2009-07-27 13:55:00  
09MONTERREY284  
Consulate Monterrey  
CONFIDENTIAL  
08MONTERREY390 | 09MONTERREY242 | 09MONTERREY250  
VZCZCXRO7213  
RR RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHHO RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS RUEHTM  
DE RUEHMC #0284/01 2081355  
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3839  
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RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MONTERREY 000284

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/27/2019

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [SNAR](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: MILITARY PRESENCE NO PANACEA FOR NUEVO LEON

REF: A) 2008 MONTERREY 390, B) MONTERREY 250, C) MONTERREY 242

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CLASSIFIED BY: Bruce Williamson, Consul General, Monterrey, State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary. Drug traffickers are continuing their campaign of intimidation against the publishers and staff of Northern Mexico's leading dealing newspaper - El Norte. El Norte leadership has reached out to local army commanders as the threats come in, but as the military is not set up to provide protective police services it has not always been able to respond in a timely manner. Meanwhile, military commanders find that as their troops collect intel and provide necessary firepower in anti-drug enforcement raids, their institution becomes enmeshed in the day-to-day violence on the street. The unreliable nature of the state/local police and the inability of the military to fully fill that void have left the public wondering who it can call upon when it is threatened. End summary.

#### The Challenge Facing El Norte

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12. (U) On July 22, Consul General met with Alejandro Junco de la Vega Sr. and his son, Alejandro Junco de la Vega Jr., key shareholders in Grupo Reforma. Grupo Reforma is the largest print media company in Mexico and Latin America. It publishes 9 daily newspapers in 4 cities, including the leading newspapers in Mexico's 3 largest cities. In Monterrey, Grupo Reforma publishes "El Norte," Northern Mexico's leading daily newspaper. In June, the Columbia School of Journalism had bestowed its annual journalism award upon Junco de la Vega Sr. for his lifelong commitment to reporting.

13. (C) In 2008, due to a continuing series of threats from the drug cartels, see Ref A, both father and son and their families relocated temporarily to Texas, although the two return to Monterrey often to oversee newspaper operations. The elder Junco de la Vega noted that while they had been able to accomplish the delicate task of dismissing one of their reporters who they discovered was working for the cartels - this reporter subsequently took another job with a prominent local television outlet - the struggle to maintain the newspaper as an independent voice was continuing. Junco Sr. stated that in Monterrey the Zetas focused on El Norte reporting on cartel activity because press coverage was a necessary first step for civil society to demand a more effective law enforcement response. Military action and civic protests were important too, he said, but to solve the problem the press needed to bring it to the citizenry's attention; in contrast, cartel bosses preferred to go about their business with as little publicity as possible.

13. (C) Threats from the Zetas had subsided, the Juncos observed, until El Norte decided to host an in-house luncheon meeting with local military commanders to discuss the overall situation. Although to lower the public profile of the event

the commanders had, at El Norte's request, arrived in civilian clothes, as was their usual practice they brought with them four truckloads of soldiers to ensure security. Since that time, harassment from the Zetas has increased. Junco Jr. stated that:

--- an El Norte reporter who had written a story on anti-drug checkpoints had been kidnapped for five hours in the neighboring community of Santa Catarina, during which time she was beaten and threatened with rape/death.

--- the hawkers who sold the newspaper at key intersections in Santa Catarina had been forcibly driven off the streets.

--- a dead body had been dumped on the Junco's family ranch south of the city.

--- a day camp the family had contemplated opening at the ranch had been the subject of phone calls threatening violence/death if bribes were not paid.

¶4. (C) Junco Sr. noted that while the army had been a key participant in the recent arrests of narco-corrupted police in the Monterrey region, ref B, the military suffered from the same fractures and pressures as every other element within the Mexican law enforcement community. While public approval of the army's performance was high, the military still needed to be wary of corruption and ineptitude within its ranks. For instance, Junco Jr. noted, when the day camp threats came in, the family telephoned the military for immediate assistance, given that the caller had stated that a vehicle with armed assailants was nearby and waiting. Seven hours later they received a return phone call.

¶5. (C) The principal advantage the military enjoyed in the war against the cartels, Junco Sr. declared, was not its institutional transparency or even greater tactical ability (as many of the Zetas themselves had previous military experience). The military had encountered success, he said, because it

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invariably could count on the element of surprise. Because the soldiers were quartered on the cartels, the traffickers were unable to pressure them into revealing operational plans and methods.

#### The Army's Point of View

¶6. (SBU) Earlier in the day, CG had met with General Luis Moreno Serrano, Commander of the Fourth Military Region (which comprises Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, and San Luis Potosi) and his number two, General Sergio Garcia - both officers with more than 40 years of military experience. During this conversation CG brought to their attention allegations of torture on the part of a U.S. citizen detained by the military for drug possession. See Ref C. Clearly chagrined, General Moreno stated that it was not the army's policy to mistreat detainees and pledged that his staff would thoroughly investigate these charges. Post will keep tabs on the local army command's inquiry into this case.

¶7. (C) Moving beyond the specific allegations, Moreno noted that the military was institutionally unable to act as a substitute police force. It could develop intel, he said, and mount enforcement actions based upon that information. However, it did not have the resources to supplant civilian law enforcement (however flawed/corrupted civilian authorities might be) or patrol communities to make them safe. For instance, Moreno declared, while the public perceived the recent string of arrests of narco-police as a military initiative, in reality the impetus had come from the state government - all the military did was to provide the necessary firepower to deter a violent reaction from those arrested. Even in his most conflictive state - Tamaulipas - when the cartels saw the military they ran because they knew that could not match their muscle, he observed.

#### Comment

¶8. (C) The differing points of view of the Juncos and Moreno highlight one of the dilemmas facing the local citizenry: when

threatened, what institution can one call upon for protection?  
Or to ask the question another way, if the federal, state, and  
local police are unreliable and the military is  
resource-constrained and unavailable, who's left?  
WILLIAMSONB